

THRILLER

# TALES:

FROM THE

# CRYPT



# THE CRYPT OF TERROR

HEH, HEH! BACK AGAIN, EAT BACK FOR MORE CHILLS AND SHIVERS! WELL, COME IN! WELCOME INTO THE CRYPT OF TERROR AND I'LL GIVE YOU OUT YOUR SHARE! YEP! IT'S ME, THE CRYPT-KEEPER, YOUR MOST FRIGHTENING HORROR! JUST SIT YOURSELF DOWN ON THAT FOGG-SWELLING, EARTHENWARE URM OVER THERE, AND I'LL ENTERTAIN YOU WHATEVER IN THE GORY ON THAT'S WHAT'S LEFT OF WHITTY WHITTAKER? WHO'S HE? WELL, YOU JUST SETTLE DOWN AND I'LL LET YOU HEAR WHITTY'S STORY IN HIS VERY OWN WORDS! READY? WHITTY CALLS THIS GABBEROUS CREATION...

## GAS-TLY PROSPECTS!



JEFF WHITTAKER'S MY HANDLE! THOUGH SOME OF THE BOYS FROM THE WAGON TRAIN I'D JOINED UP WITH TO COME WEST TO CALIFORNIA HAD NICKNAMED ME 'WHITTY' / THAT'S 'CAUSE I WAS SO CHICKEN, AND MY NAME'S TURNED GRAY-WHITE LONG YEARS BEFORE! BUT I'D BEEN A PROSPECTIN' POOL ALL WIFE, AN WHEN THEY FOUND THE RICHER STUFF OVER AT SUTTER'S SAW MILL IN 1848, I PACKED MY ODDS AN HEADED WEST WITH THE REST OF THE FORTY-NINERS...

WAL, WHITTY! WE'LL BE IN CALIFORNIA BY THIS TIME, NEST WEEK! WHAT'S YOUR PLANS?

ME? I'M HEADIN' RIGHT FOR THEM GOLD FIELDS! GONNA STAKE ME OUT A CLAIM AN FARM ME A FORTUNE!



YEP! THERE WERE MY PLANS! I  
HAD LOTS O' HIGH HOPES IN THEM  
DAYS! SOON AS WE HIT SACRA-  
MENTO, I LET OUT UP THE VALLEY.  
KEEP GOING, STRANGER! TRY  
THIS LAND'S ALL  
STAGED OUT!



SO! TEN MILES  
FURTHER  
UP-RIVER!

WOULDN'T TAKE ME LONG FIND OUT  
THAT MOST O' THE GOLD'D BEEN  
PLAYED OUT BY THE TIME THAT  
I GOT THERE! YELLER-HUNNERY  
CHITTERS'D TAKEN CLIPPED  
SHIPS 'ROUND THE CAPE O' GOOD  
HOPE AN' BEATEN US OVER-  
LANDERS TO THE FIELDS...



THIS STREAM'S BEEN  
PANNEED OUT ALREADY!

FINALLY! I DECIDED TO TRY UP IN  
THE HILLS! I'D HEARD TALK ABOUT  
HIGH YIELDS NEW' FOUND! I BOUNED  
ME AHEADTOWN SO'S I COULD  
HUNT BY OWN WITTLES. A POK-AGE  
AM' A SHAKEL T' DIS WITH, AN'  
SOME CANNED BEANS! SPENT  
EVERY LAST DIME I OWNED...



BETTER TAKE S' MORE  
SHELLS, STRANGER!  
GOTTA WATCH OUT FOR  
SLAM JUMPERS!  
IN THE HILLS!

OH!  
THAT  
SO?

LE'ME TELL YOU, THAT'S BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY, THEM  
CALIFORNIA HILLS! TOMORROW MORNIN' PINES WHISPERIN'  
OVERHEAD! BUSHIN' STREAMS CASCADEIN' OVER  
ROCKS! QUIET LAKES LAYIN' LIKE LOOKIN'-GLASSES!  
I PYOTED ME A TENT NEXT TO ONE O' THEM QUIET  
LAKES AND MADE ME A CAMP...



THIS SNOW IS FURTE, BUT IT AIN'T  
GETTIN' ME RIGHT! I'M WORROD,  
I STAYT DUGGIN'!

IT WERE GOLD ALL RIGHT! AND LONGO, WHAT A  
HIGH DEPOSIT! THAT THERE STREAM MUSTA BEEN  
HOLLIN' THEM RUBBETS DOWN FROM THE HILLS  
SINCE TIME BEGUN... AN' THEY WERE ALL LAYIN'  
RIGHT THERE FOR ME...



IT'LL TAKE ME A YEAR TO  
CLEAR OUT FACE STRUCK!  
I'M RIGHT! RIGHT!

I TRIED A FEW SPOTS WITHOUT MUCH SUCCESS! THEN  
I FOUND ME A STREAM FLEEDIN' INTO THE LAKE! SHE  
WAS A FAST-HUNNIN' STREAM! A-COMIN' DOWN  
FROM THEM HILLS AND A-BUBBLIN' OUT INTO THE  
QUIET LAKE... STREAM! IT ALL UP TOWND THE SPOT.



WHY'D THAT SOMETHIN'  
SHINN' IN THE WATER?

SO I STARTED PANNIN'! I FIGURED ON CLEANIN' OUT  
THE MOUTH O' THE STREAM WHERE SHE EMPTIED  
INTO THE LAKE... THEN WORKIN' MY WAY UP-STREAM  
TILL I'D PLAYED THE STRIKE OUT...



LOOK AT JUNE RUBBET!  
MUST BE A FOUR-DUNCER,  
AT LEAST!

THEN, 'BOUT A MONTH AFTER I'D STARTED WORKIN' BY CLAIN, IT HAPPENED. THIS BIG BURLY-LOOKIN' CRITTER SHOWS UP? I'D PAIDNED ME 'BOUT FOUR THOUSAND DOLLARS WORTH O' GOLD BY THAT TIME AN' WAS FEELIN' PRETTY GOOD. THAT WAS WHERE I MADE MY **BIG MISTAKE!** I GUESS HE'D BEEN SPIN' ON ME...AN' I LET HIM GET TOO CLOSE...



HE WHIPS OUT HIS GOLT 'N' ASS PAINS IT THREE BEFORE I KNOW WHAT HAPPENS...



THE TWO RED-HOT LEAD SLUGS CAATCH ME IN THE BUT AN' I REEL OVER! THE PAIN IS **SOMETHIN' AWFUL**, AN' I'M **GOIN' MAD!** WHEN HE COMES OVER TO SEE IF I'M DONE FOR, I KICK OUT AT HIM! HIS GOLT GOES FLYIN'.



THE GOLT LANDS OFF IN THE GRASS AND THE BURLY GUY DIVES AFTER IT? I SEES MY CHANCE AND, GETTIN' T'WY FEET, HOO-TAILS IT FOR CAMP.



I KEEP GOIN', EVEN THOUGH THE PAIN IS BLUIN' ME! BACK O' ME, I HEAR HIM SHOUT WHEN HE SPIES ME 'G!



A BLUE WHISTLER PAST MY EAR AS I TUMBLE INTO CAMP! I GRAB MY SHOTSUM AND THE BOX O' SHELLS, OVER BEHIND A ROCK, AN' LET GO WITH BOTH BARRELS.



THE BURLY CRITTER MUSTA CAUGHT THE BURLIEST BLIST ON THE SHOTSUM BARREL. 'CAUSE HE'S BEHIND A TREE WHEN THE BUCKSHOT PEPPERS 'ROUND HIM.



SO WE SIT THERE HIM BEHIND THE BIG OL' PINE, AND ME CRO. ON INS BEHIND THAT ROCK, BLEEDIN' LIKE A LEAKY WATER BAG.

ONE OF US HAS NOT TO FALL ASLEEP, AN' I AINT TIRED!

OH, LONGY IF HE DON'T GET ME, I'LL BLEED TO DEATH!



I STUFF THE SHOTGUN SHELLS FROM THE BOX INTO MY POCKETS AND SIT BACK TO WAIT! I KNOW I'M GONNA TO DIE, BUT I AINT GONNA LET HIM LIVE EITHER...

YOU'LL NEVER TAKE JACK CLARK, YUN SHANE! I'LL GET YUN FIRST! I SWEAR IT!

I'M WAITIN', OL' TIMER!



I GUESS I MUSTA PASSED OUT FROM THE PAIN, 'CAUSE THE NEXT THING I KNOW, MY EYES POP OPEN AND HE'S STANDIN' OVER ME WITH A KNIFE.

THAT'LL TEACH YUN NOT TO FALL ASLEEP!



I'M GRIMIN' AT HIM, AND HE'S STARRIN' BACK AT ME! THE KNIFE IS DRAININ' BLOOD! I TRY TO GRAB FOR MY GUN, BUT I CANT MOVE A MUSCLE! FUNNY, BUT I DONT FEEL ANY PAIN, EITHER! SO I KNOWS THAT I'M DEAD...

STOP GRIMIN' AT ME, YUN OLD COOT!



SO HE STARTS GRINN'! THE GROUND IS HARD AND HE CURSES A LOT! I JUST KEEP GRIMIN' AT HIM! HE'S GETTIN' MADDER AND MADDER.

AH, TO DECK WITH IT! SHE IS GOOD ENOUGH!



BUT I JUST KEEP GRIMIN'! HE SPITS AT ME, AN BOGS AN' GETS MY POK-ASS AN' SHOVES.

I'M GONNA JURY YUN, YUN OLD BEETZ! THEN I'M GONNA FINISH WORTHIN' YER CLAIM! ONLY NOW, IT'S MY CLAIM!



HE GRABS ME AND DRAGS ME OVER TO THE SHALLOW GRAVE HE'S DUG OUT OF THE ROCKY LOAM! HE KINGS ME IN.

THERE! REST IN PEACE, YUN OLD PRANK-DOO!



SO I ROLL INTO THE GRAVE AND LAND FACE UP STAYIN' AT HIM AND GRINNIN' AT HIM! AND HE'S RED AS A BEET, HE'S SO MAD! HE TELLS AT ME AND PLUNGES A SHOVEL-FULL OF DIRT INTO MY FACE...

STOP STAYIN' AT ME! STOP GRINNIN' AT ME! SHUT YOUR EYES WHEN YEN DEAD! CLOSE YER MOUTH!



FORTY SOON I'M ALL COVERED, AN' LAYIN' NICE AN' COZY IN MY GRAVE! I HEAR HIS HOR-NALED BOOTS CRUNCHIN' AROUND OVER ME AS HE STAMPS THE GROUND DOWN HARD. SO'S IT MOST LOSE FRESH AIR...

HEH, HEH! YOU WERE WRONG, OH, OLD TIMERS! I GOT YOU FIRST, AFTER ALL!



I FIGURE I LAY THERE A WEEK OR SO IN THE SAGROUND! THE CRAWLIN' THINGS START WORKIN' ON ME! I I DON'T FEEL 'EM, BUT I KNOW THEY'RE THERE 'CAUSE I CAN HEAR 'EM SCRATCHIN' AROUND ME! THEN, AFTER A LONG TIME, I HEAR SOMETHIN' UP ABOVE, CLAWIN' AT THE GROUND...



IT'S A WILD CAT GRABIN' ME UP! IT CLEARS THE SOO OFF'S MY FACE AND SHOULDER, BRASS MY COLLAR BETWEEN ITS PANGS, AND PULLS ME UP TO A SITTHIN' POSITION...



THEN, AFORE IT KIN START WIPIN' ME TO SHREDS, ANOTHER WILD CAT SHOWS UP...



RIGHT AWAY THEY START SPITTIN' AND HOWLIN' AT EACH OTHER! I SIT THERE, GRINNIN' AT THEM



THEY BAIL INTO ONE ANOTHER, BUT SOON THE ONE THEY DUG ME UP GOES OFF A-SCREECHIN' AND A-BURNIN' HIS WOUNDS! THEN THE LATECOMER WHU' WON COMES OVER, SHIFFS AT ME, AND LOSES OFF HIMSELF! I GUESS I'M TOO FAR SORE TO MAKE GOOD EATIN' ANYMORE...



SO I SIT THERE STARK AT MY  
TENT, LISTENIN' TO THE BURLY  
GUY'S SNORIN'. HE SLEEPS RIGHT  
THROUGH THE MELT.



IN THE MORNING, HE COMES OUT  
OF THE TENT. FOR A MINUTE I  
THINK HIS EYES IS SOAKIN' FLY  
RIGHT OUTTA HIS HAIR.



HE COMES OVER TO ME, LOOKIN' A  
LITTLE GREEN AROUND THE EYES.  
HIS MOUTH IS DRIBBLIN' A LITTLE  
SPITTLE, LIKE HE'S BEEN SUCKIN'  
ON A BAR O' SOAP.



BUT I JUST SIT THERE GAWKIN' AT HIM! I CAN  
TELL HE'S GETTIN' SOME 'CAUSE HIS EYES IS RED-  
DENIN' UP. HE HAULS OFF AND KICKS ME IN THE  
FACE, AND I FLOPS BACKWARDS INTO MY SHALLOW  
GRAVE.



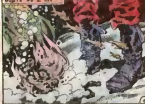
HE SCRAMBLES OFF TOWARD THE TENT AN' COMES  
BACK WITH THE PICK-AXE AN' SHOVEL. HE GRABS  
HOLD OF ME AND CRASS ME DOWN T' THE LAKE.



HE TIES THE SHOVEL AN' THE PICK-AXE T' MY  
FEET WITH SOME ROPE.



THEN HE HAULS ME INTO THE LAKE. HE PULLS ME  
OUT AS DEEP AS HE CAN SO AN' LETS ME SETTLE  
TO THE BOTTOM. I SHIP AT HIS HOB-NAILED  
BOOTS AS I HIT.



THE WATER STARTS FILLIN' INTO MY GUTS. AN  
BURGLIN' INTO MY LUNGS! SOME NOBBY FISH DOOME  
'ROUND...PEERIN' AT ME! ONE OF 'EM TAKES A BIP  
AT MY HAND! I SWAY BACK AND FORTH LAZILY...



WHERE THE RUSSIN STREAM EMPTIED INTO THE LAKE,  
A SADDY CURRENT SWIRLS! I'M LAYIN' RIGHT SNACK IN  
THE MIDDLE OF IT! PRETTY SOON, I'M TURNIN' AND  
TWISTIN', AND THE ROPES IS RUSSIN' ON THE SHARP  
EDGES OF THE ROCKS...



IT TAKES ABOUT A WEEK FOR THE ROPES TO SAW  
THROUGH! MEANWHILE THE FISH HAVE BEEN PECKIN'  
MEET... AND BY THE TIME I'M OUT FREE, I'M IN PRETTY  
BAD SHAPE! I'M ALL WATER-LOGGED AND EULATED,  
AND THE SADDIES THAT HAVE FORMED IN MY INSIDES  
FORCE ME TO THE SURFACE...



I GUESS THOSE CRAZY CURRENTS MUSTA DRAGGED  
ME 'ROUND AND 'ROUND, 'CAUSE I POP UP RIGHT AT  
THE MOUTH OF THE STREAM WHERE SUAST-BOY IS  
PANNIN'! HE NEARLY FALLE IN THE WATER WHEN  
HE SPOTS ME...



HE STARTS YELLIN' AND SCREAMIN'  
AT ME, BUT I JUST STARE AT HIM  
HIM AND GRIN REAL BILLY-LIKE!  
ONLY I DON'T LOOK TOO JOYFUL!  
ANYWAY, FACT IS I CAN'T PRETTY  
BAD POP! AT LEAST THAT'S WHAT  
HE COMPLAINS OF AS HE GRABS ME  
BY THE NECK...



HE LINGS ME OVER TO THE CLEAN  
ING AND LAYS ME IN THE MIDDLE!  
THEN HE STARTS DRAGGIN' OVER  
LOGS HE'S BEEN COLLECTIN'...



I GUESS HE WAS GETTIN' READY TO  
BUILD HIMSELF A CABIN WITH 'EM,  
LOGS AND STAY OVER THE WINTER!  
ANYWAY HE DECIDES TO SACRIFICE  
'EM ALL FOR ME! HE TOSSES ME  
ON THE FLE...



LET'S SEE YOU  
COME BACK FROM  
THIS, YOU BLASTED...



I'M LAYIN' THERE ON THE FLE OF LOSS IN THE MIDDLE O' THE CLEARIN'! ALL AROUND THE BRUSH IS DRY, 'CAUSE IT'S BEEN A DRY SUMMER! RIGHT AWAY, THE FLAMES ARE LEAPIN' TOWARD ME...



THERE'S A TERRIFIC BOOM... AND I BLOW OFF! THE SHOT-GUN SHELLS I'D PACKED INTO MY POCKETS GO OFF LIKE A DYNAMITE CHARGE! I RIP INTO A THOUSAND PIECES, AND THE EXPANDING GASES AND COMPRESSED STEAM INSIDE ME SENDS THE FLAMIN' WINGS FLYIN' THROUGH THE AIR...



WAMP! A FIRE I START' IN A COUPLE O' MINUTES, THE WHOLE CLEARIN' IS SURROUNDED BY A CIRCLE OF FLAME. A WHITE HOT WALL ROVIN' HIGH THE BURLY CRITTER! HE DON'T STAND A CHANCE O' GETTIN' THROUGH IT! TANT LONG 'TIL HE STARTS SHRIVELIN' UP PAW...



THE HEAT IS TERRIFIC! OF COURSE, I DON'T FEEL NOthin', BUT I CAN HEAR MY WATER-LOGGED BODY A-WHISH' AND A-PONCH! I GUESS I BLACKENED UP A BIT, AND THE WATER IN MY ROTTED CLOTHES OBIES OUT! SOON THEY START TO BURN! I AM SURE SOMETHIN' STRANGE GOIN' ON INSIDE ME... LIKE I'M EXPLODIN' FROM THE STEAM AND GAS! I THY...



SOME OF 'EM LANDS ON THE BURLY GUY, AND HE'S SO BUSY FEELIN' ME OFF N HIM AND RATTIN OUT HIS BURNIN' CLOTHES THAT HE DON'T NOTICE I'VE ALSO LANDED ALL AROUND THE EDGE OF THE CLEARIN'... IN THE DRY BRUSH... IN THE T-MOOR-LIKE PINES... EVERYWHERE.



HEH, HEH! YOU PLUMB MAKE, WHITEY! AND IT SHOW WAR A... AHEH... IT BURE WAS A DOODY OF A TALE, EH, KID-DEST? YOU KNOW, WHEN I FIRST TOLD THIS YARN TO MY IDLEST EDITORS, THEY CONFESSED THAT THEY NEVER KNEW A CORPSE COULD WRITE HIS OWN STORY! I STRAIGHTENED THEM OUT, THOUGH! WHITEY COULDN'T WRITE HIS OWN

NAME I'VE OUTPATED THE WHOLE THING TO ME! HEH, HEH! A REAL GHOST WRITER, EH? WELL, NOW I'LL TURN YOU OVER TO THE KNUT-KEEPER! I'LL SEE YOU LATER ON!



...BUT AFTER A WHILE IT'S QUIET... 'CEPT FOR THE CRAGGLIN' OF THE FIRE AS IT SWEEPS ON THROUGH THE DRY WOODED HILLS! I GUESS I CAN REST EASY NOW! I PLUMB FINISHED MY WORK!

# THE VAULT OF HORROR!

GREETINGS, BORY BRAVE-SHOULD? IT'S ME, THE VAULT-KEEPER, AGAIN! TIME TO QUEST-SPOT THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S MAG CHIEF MORE! SO BRAG YOUR BATTERED BOODIES INTO THE VAULT AND STRETCH THEM OUT ON THAT CASE OF ICE OVER THERE! IT'LL KEEP YOU COOL...WHICH IS THE PROPER MOOD FOR THIS CHILLING TALE OF ICE, SNOW, AND HOT LOVE I CALL...

## A Hollywood Ending!



HUGH HOWARDS, FAMOUS HOLLYWOOD MOVIE PRODUCER AND CELEBRATED SPORTSMAN AND WORLD TRAVELER, GUIDED HIS PRIVATE TRANSPORT PLANE LOW OVER THE GLARING ICE-FIELDS OF THE FROZEN NORTH.

"THERE'S AN AWKING  
SETTLEMENT, DOWN  
FARRE, MR. HOWARDS!"

ALL RIGHT, EVANS? TELL  
THE PUBLICITY BOYS TO  
FASTEN THEIR SAFETY  
BELTS? WE'RE GOING IN!



DOWN BELOW THE BLEAKING AIRPLANE, FUR-CLAD FIGURES  
PANTED FROM THEIR HIGGS, WAVING AND CHATTERING...



THEY SEE  
US!

THERE'S A LEVEL SPOT...  
CAST OF THE SETTLEMENT!  
I'M GOING TO BRING 'EM  
DOWN ON IT!

SOON THE SKY-BIANT'S RE-BURNERS  
TOUCHED THE SURFACE OF THE CHOSSEN  
ICY EXPANSE AND CAME TO A STOP! THE  
DRUMS BEATING POPULATION ERUPTED  
ABOUT THE PLANE...



WELL! C'MON YOU BUYS!  
LET'S GET SOME FUR  
POWER AND GET OUT  
OF HERE!

YEE.  
MR.  
HOWARDS!

OHAY,  
MR.

MR. HOWARDS STEPPED FROM  
THE PLANE AND ADDRESSED THE  
GATHERED ARCTIC INHABITANTS...



ANYBODY  
HERE SPEAK  
ENGLISH?

I I  
SPEAK  
ENGLISH!

MR. HOWARDS TURNED TO THE  
FUR-CLAD FIGURE THAT STEPPED  
FORWARD THROUGH THE CROWD!  
IT WAS A GIRL...



GOOD! MY NAME  
IS HOWARDS! HUSH  
HOWARDS! I'M A  
HOLLYWOOD PROD  
DAR! YOU'RE  
NOT AN Eskimo!

NO, MR.  
HOWARDS!  
I AM AN  
AMERICAN!

THE GIRL SMILED AT HUSH! HER  
EYES SPARKLED! SHE WAS  
BEAUTIFUL!



WHAT ARE  
YOU DOING  
IN THE SOO-  
FORSAKEN  
PLACE?

I LIVE HERE  
WITH THESE  
PEOPLE! THAT  
WOODEN BUILDING  
IS MY HOME! MY  
GUARDIAN BROUGHT  
ME HERE SIX  
YEARS AGO!

HUGH STUDIED THE ATTRACTIVE GIRL STANDING  
BEFORE HIM! HE'D NEVER SEEN A MORE PHOTO-  
GENIC FACE...



YOU SAY YOU LIVE  
THERE IN THAT SHACK?  
IS IT HEATED?

WHY, YEE! THERE'S AN  
OIL STOVE IN IT! WHAT  
WAKES YOU ASK?

HUGH TOOK THE GIRL'S HITTENED HAND AND  
STARTED TOWARD THE SNOW-LADEN FRAME  
BUILDING...



C'MON! I WANT TO  
TAKE A LOOK AT YOUR  
FRAME!

MY FRAME? WELL,  
REALLY NOW, MR.  
HOWARDS...?



LOOK! DON'T GET IN A HUFF! I'M A HOLLYWOOD PRODUCER! THIS IS STRICTLY BUSINESS! IF YOU'RE NOT WHAT IT TAKES, I CAN MAKE A STAR OUT OF YOU!

A... A START WHAT? THAT?



HUNT HOW LONG DID YOU SAY YOU'VE BEEN UP HERE?

SIX YEARS! 'DADDY'... THAT'S MY GUARDIAN! DOCTOR WHEENE... BROUGHT ME HERE AFTER THE ACCIDENT!



ACCIDENT? YES! MY REAL FATHER AND I WERE IN AN AUTO ACCIDENT! FATHER WAS DOCTOR WHEENE'S COLLABORATOR! FATHER WAS KILLED! I LOST MY MEMORY. I DON'T EVEN REMEMBER WHAT MY FATHER LOOKED LIKE!



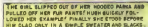
JAMIESA, HUNT

I GUESS NOT! ANYWAY, 'DADDY' BROUGHT ME HERE! HE HAD TO TEACH ME ALL OVER AGAIN! I'D FORGOTTEN EVERYTHING! I'D EVEN FORGOTTEN HOW TO WALK AND TALK! IT WAS AWFUL! BUT 'DADDY' WAS PATIENT, AND I LEARNED QUICKLY.



THEN YOU REALLY DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT MOVIES OR MOVIE STARS?

I'M AFRAID NOT, MR. HOWARD! BUT LOOK... WE'D BETTER TAKE OFF OUR APRONS NOW THAT WE'RE INSIDERS!



THE GIRL SLIPPED OUT OF HER HOODED PARKA AND PULLED OFF HER FUR PARTS! HUSH QUICKLY! FOLLOWED HER EXAMPLE! FINALLY SHE STOOD BEFORE HIM CLAD ONLY IN A SIMPLE SWEATER AND SLACKS.

TERRIFIC! TERRIFIC! WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

TERRY! IT'S SHORT FOR THERESA! TERRY AARON!



YOU'RE A SWEET KID, TERRY! IT'S LIKE TO HELP YOU! WHERE IS YOUR GUARDIAN... THIS DOCTOR WHEENE? I WANT TO ASK HIM PERMISSION TO TAKE YOU TO HOLLYWOOD!

HE... HE'S NEVER LET ME GO! HE'S FORBIDDEN ME TO EVER LEAVE THE SETTLEMENT! BUT... IF YOU WISH, YOU MAY ASK HIM! HE'S AT THE TRADING POST! HE'LL BE BACK IN TWO DAYS!

TWO DAYS LATER, THE SHINING PRIVATE AIR-TRANSPORT STILL SAT ON THE OPEN ICE-FIELD OUTSIDE THE SETTLEMENT. HUGH HOWARDS HAD STAYED WAITING FOR DOCTOR WHEEDS TO RETURN BY DOG-SLED FROM THE DISTANT TRADING-POST.

LOOK HERE, EVANS? WHEN IN GLAZES ARE WE LEAVING THIS FROSTY HOLE? IT'S BEEN TWO DAYS! I GOT A WIFE AND KIDS!

SORRY, BOYS! MR. HOWARDS HAS BUSINESS HERE!

YEAH! BUSINESS WITH THAT GARDY'S SEEN 'EM TOGETHER!



HUGH CAUGHT TERRY IN HIS ARM!



OH, HUGH! WHEN?



AND ARE YOU SURE, TERRY?

NEVER! I FORBID IT! YOU'RE NOT LEAVING, TERRY! YOU'RE STAYING HERE WITH ME!

BUT DOCTOR! I LOVE TERRY! I CAN GIVE HIM SO MUCH

HUGH WANTS TO MAKE A MOVIE-STAR OUT OF ME! HE'S A PRODUCER!

THE FLU-GLAD DOCTOR STAMPEDED INTO THE BOOM..

GET OUT! LEAVE HER ALONE! GET OUT OF MY HOUSE!

WELL, DADDY! YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND! HUGH WANTS TO MARRY ME AND TAKE ME TO HOLLYWOOD!

THAT'S RIGHT, SIR!



INDEED THEY HAD BEEN TOGETHER... ALMOST EVERY CHANCE THEY COULD! THERE WAS SOMETHING ABOUT TERRY. SOMETHING HUGH NEVER FELT ABOUT A GIRL BEFORE...

I'M IN LOVE WITH YOU, TERRY! I NEED YOU! YOU'VE GOT TO COME BACK TO THE STATES WITH ME! I WANT TO MARRY YOU!

OH, HUGH! DO YOU MEAN IT? I'VE NEVER BEEN IN LOVE BEFORE! NOW CAN I BE SURE?

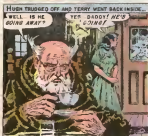


SUDDENLY A BLAST OF ICEY WIND SWIFT THROUGH THE BOOM AS THE DOOR WAS FLUNG OPEN...

TAKE YOUR HANDS OFF HER!

HUGH! I'VE GOT DADDY!





HEH, HEH! SO HUGH-SPIRITED  
TERRY OUT OF THE COLD-  
COUNTRY TO THE LAND OF  
PALM TREES AND RIVER LIGHTS...  
HOLLYWOOD! THEY WERE  
MARRIED AS SOON AS THEY  
ARRIVED, AND THE FILM  
COLONY WENT WILD OVER  
THE PRODUCER'S NEW BRIDE  
AND FUTURE STAR! SCREEN  
TESTS WERE MADE, A  
SCRIPT WAS CHOSEN, AND  
SHOOTING BEGAN.



ALL WENT WELL FOR A FEW  
WEEKS! THEN, THE MAKE-UP  
MAN CAME TO SEE HUGH...

I GET... I GET EES  
ABOUT YOUR *NOSE*.  
WHEW! HOWARD!  
SHE EES A COMELY  
WOMAN... BUT HER  
SKIN LATELY...  
WELL...



SPEAK UP,  
MARKEL!  
WHAT IS  
IT?

I HAD TROUBLE  
LATELY, HUGH!  
SHE IS *HARRASD*!  
HER SKIN EES *OFF*  
*CRACKING*! I  
CANNOT DO ANY-  
THING WITH  
EET!

I... I  
HADN'T  
NOTICED!  
I'LL SPEAK  
TO HER!



THAT NIGHT, HUGH TOLD TERRY ABOUT THE MAKE-  
UP MAN'S COMPLAINT.



WHAT IS IT, DEAR?  
AREN'T YOU BETTING  
ENOUGH *HEST*?  
AM I *WORKING*  
YOU TOO HARD?

I DON'T KNOW, HUGH!  
I HAVEN'T BEEN *FEEL-*  
*ING* WELL! I *AM*  
*ILL*!

THE NEXT DAY, TERRY DIDN'T SHOW UP AT THE  
STUDIO! HUGH RETURNED TO THEIR PALATIAL  
RESIDENT WELLS HOME TO PATCH HER...



TERRY! WHAT'S *WROG*?  
WHY ARE YOU WEARING  
THOSE *SLONES*... AND  
THAT *REN*?

SOMETHING'S  
WRONG, HUGH! SOME-  
THING'S *TERIBLY*  
WRONG! BUT I *WILL*  
GET OVER IT!

HOWEVER, TERRY *DIDN'T* GET OVER IT! IN FACT,  
STRANGER THINGS BEGAN TO HAPPEN...



LORD, HONEY! WHY  
SO MUCH *PERFUME*?  
YOU *REEK* FROM IT!

OH, HUGH! *WHEW*!  
I *NEVER* SHOULD  
HAVE COME TO  
HOLLYWOOD!

IN THE DAYS THAT FOLLOWED, TERRY LOCKED  
HERSELF IN HER ROOM, REFUSING TO COME OUT!  
SHE SHOWED HER FOOD SENT UP AND LEFT OUT-  
SIDE HER DOOR.



TERRY! YOU'VE GOT  
TO LET ME IN! TERRY!  
PLEASE! I'LL GET  
A DOCTOR!

IT'S *TOO LATE*.  
HONEY! SO *AWAY*!  
LEAVE... ME...  
*ALONE*!

AND THEN DOCTOR WHEEDS ARRIVED! HE'D TRAVELED BY DOG- sled, MAIL-PACKET, TRAIN, AND PLANE TO GET TO THE HOWARDS HOME...

DOCTOR WHEEDS: WHERE IS SHE, HOWARDS? I'VE GOT TO TAKE HER BACK BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE! YOU MOTHER SHOULD HAVE TAKEN HER HOME!



SHE'S UP IN HER ROOM, DOCTOR! SHE REFUSED TO SEE ANYONE! THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH HER! FIRST MY MAKE-UP MAN COMPLAINED ABOUT HER JACK, THEN SHE STARTED WEARING GLOVES AND A FEEL! NOW, SHE'S DECIDED HERSELF! HER VOICE SOUNDED SO STRANGE! TODAY, SHE EVEN REFUSED TO ANSWER ME WHEN I CALLED!



THEN IT... IT IS TOO LATE! TAKE ME TO HER!



WHAT IS IT, DOCTOR? TELL ME! HER FATHER, PROFESSOR ARLEN, AND MYSELF WERE COLLABORATING ON A SCIENTIFIC EXPERIMENT WHEN THE ACCIDENT OCCURRED! WITH HIS DYING BREATH ARLEN BEHEADED ME TO TRY OUR NEW PROCESS ON TERRY!



THE ACCIDENT HAPPENED ON THE HIGHWAY JUST OUTSIDE MY LABORATORY! WE WORKED WITH MONKEYS, BUT FOUND THAT EVEN THOUGH WE REVIVED THEM AFTER THEY'D BEEN A FEW MINUTES DEAD, THEY CONTINUED TO DEGRAD! GOLD WAS THE ONLY ANSWER! GOLD... TO PRESERVE THEM!

YOU REVIVED THEN AFTER DEATH?



YES, MR. HOWARDS! TERRY ARLEN WAS DEAD! I REVIVED HER! THAT WAS THE EXPERIMENT PROFESSOR ARLEN AND I HAD BEEN WORKING ON! I RUSHED HER TO THAT ANESTHETIC TO KEEP HER FROM DETERIORATING! I HAD TO TEACH HER EVERYTHING ALL OVER AGAIN! THE REVIVING ACTION REVERTS THE PATIENT TO INFANTHOOD! TERRY HAS ACTUALLY BEEN DEAD FOR OVER SIX YEARS!

GOOD LORD! HERE, DOCTOR! THIS IS HER ROOM!



HOWARDS AND WHEEDS FORCED OPEN TERRY'S DOOR! AS IT SWUNG AHAIR, THE PETID RAMBIC ODOR OF DEATH BURSTED THEIR NOSTRILS! TERRY LAY UPON HER BED IN A FLIMSY PINK GOWN! HER FLESH WAS ROTTEN UPON HER BONES! HER FACE WAS A GRAY, SKULL-LIKE DEATH-MADE... ITS BARRED TEETH SET IN AN IDIOTIC GRIN! A WAVE OF NAUSEA SWEEPED OVER HOWARD AS HE STARED AT THE SHAPELESS PUTRID REMAINS OF HIS ONCE LOVELY WIFE...

COME, MY BOY! WE CAN'T HELP HER NOW!




HER, HER! SO THAT'S WHY TERRY DOWNED HERSELF WITH PERFUME! AFTER ALL... HOW MUCH CAN A BODY STAND, EVEN A DEAD BODY! POOR HUSBAND! WELL, A COLD WIFE IS BETTER THAN NO WIFE AT ALL... STONE COLD, THAT IS! MAYBE, IF TERRY'S STATED UP NORTH, SHE'D HAVE LASTED INDEFINITELY, INSTEAD OF GETTING ON THE MOOF! I'LL GET THOSE HOT BLIES! LIGHTS DIDN'T HELP THE SITUATION, EITHER! OH, WELL! SHE'D PROBABLY HAVE BEEN A ROTTEN ACTRESS ANYWAY! NOW I'LL TURN YOU BACK TO THE DRY-KEEPER 'UTE! SEE YOU NEXT IN MY MAG... THE RABBIT OF HONOR!



THE END!





## ACID TEST!

"If you think I'm going to divorce you, Homer Wormwood, you're insane! I know how much you've come to hate me . . . and the feeling is mutual . . . but you're not getting away from me so easily! I've given up the best years of my life to you and you'll continue to support me as long as I live!"

Homer watched his wife disappear into the kitchen, and a weary smile flared across his face. *Here it goes out my way, Edna, he thought . . . as long as you live, eh? It may be a good deal less time than you think!*

His fingers shook as he took from his pocket a small bottle marked: CAUTION: SULPHURIC ACID! He glanced furtively toward the kitchen door, then removed the bottle cap and poured the contents of the vial into the drink he had been preparing for Edna. *This was the easiest way out!* Put Edna to the acid test, in a manner of speaking . . . and watch the agony of her fatal failure!

His wife's voice was grating on his ears again, continuing the argument he had purposely begun the moment he had returned from work that night. He wouldn't have so submit much longer to that despicable voice, Homer mused. *Sulphuric was great at bringing peace to people!*

It was year six of Homer Wormwood's marital hell, and just the night before he had determined to make this the last year . . . the last month, week and day! He had quietly cried to squem loose by divorce, but it had resulted only in Edna redoubling her vituperative squalling about his inefficiency as a help-mate, provider and companion. Divorce was totally out of the question, she had screamed at him so often that it had become only a vague rumble in his ears. They were stuck with each

other . . . forever! And Homer had gradually come to realize that Edna liked the state of things . . . thrived on his being trapped for life . . . exulted over her ability to make him cringe and quail before her razor-sharp tongue. And realization that Edna derived enjoyment from these furious ruses, had inspired Homer's plan for freedom. He had begun the fight tonight with the idea of getting her wound up in another of her turbulent tantrums . . . was praying that she would become blind with pent-up rage! So blind that she would gulp down her drink without a moment's hesitation!

"Haven't you got anything to say in your own defense, you miserable fool?" Edna had roared the room and was standing opposite him, her face flushed with the heat of her own words.

*Not another word, Homer cautioned himself. My silence always infuriates her. A couple more minutes of ranting with no answer from me, and she'll grab that drink with unreasoning fury and gulp it down!*

Words continued to pour out of Edna like a raging torrent, and Homer stood his ground and looked sheepishly at the carpet. Suddenly, as though exhausted by her own violent clamoring, Edna stopped and picked up the cocktail glass Homer had filled for her. She held it poised in front of her lips.

*She's going to drink it now! he thought. If I keep up this delated act just a moment longer . . .*

"Pahhh!" Edna started at that moment. "If there's anything I detest, it's a man who acts like a whipped dog! Maybe this will stir you up!" And with that, Edna hauled her drink in Homer's bewildered face.

A blanket of pain seared into his brain. His eyes became orbs of screaming hot agony . . . the stretch of his own tortured flesh choked his nostrils. And the last thing Homer Wormwood heard, before a veil of unconsciousness descended upon him, was the wail of his own voice stretching aloud a single word: "ACID ACID . . . ACID . . . !"

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# THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S CORNER

Crawl into the old Crypt crawls! Not to be confused by those other two art lovers, V. E. and G. W., who have been mesmerizing you with miserable morbid music from their rotting record racks, I have recently obtained a collection of folk songs from some dead folk! Later some while I found a few pieces on my pulsating piano! I'll start my next melody with that old favorite, "On Top of Old Spooky", and my next way through "The Lion Grows-up", and for my last offering I'll give you with my noted condition of the latest-time made popular by Country Stars, "Ghost Train"! But while my last bubble blower are talking the books, let us discuss more scary things!

First of all, the noted Car "Queen-of-the-Inner" write-essence... **THE FICKELY GRAVE-DIGGERS AND MONUMENT CHISELERS (WE WRAP 'EM, THEN TAG THEM, CLAMMING AND SHOP-LIFTING ASSOCIATION OF GHOSTTOWN, MAINE...** have just dug up the heaviest set possible! First place goes to **Donovan Dark Davis (MY BOY)**, for his bloody **GROUNDS FOR MORMON** School which is taken by **Coating his Craniums**, for his shocking **ROTTIN' THING** To **Gleefully Graham** legs to third place because... for his cowardly **EDGES FOR A SPIN**! Every Jack Brown, who shook spot with his bookbinding **BOARD TO DEATH**! The last, **WERTHOOP**, leads in fifth.

And now a message from my idiot editor! They have instructed me to take you authors who have written in that EACH of your letters has been carefully read, and the contents as well as compliments given, read, digested, and in most cases acted upon! They have asked me to sincerely thank all of you who have written! Their only regret is that they find it impossible to answer each and every letter personally, so they would like as much to do! (The above statements constitute a paid political machine contract! The opinions expressed in these statements are not necessarily those of your columnist! In fact, I don't give a damn's opinion! They if you write or not! Come I'm not in the habit of hiring those ridiculous social and business organizations to assist your various, vulgar tastes! Now let's not get HASTY, old boy! These words constitute your **BREAD AND BLOOD**! Their wish is now command—Ed! So don't any of them with you are serious should drop dead! (Aww, stop leaving your toothless gums and tell me about your **Intestinal**—Ed! Oh, yeah! As I'm sure you've noticed, there has been a deluge of questions on the words making use of key EC title words such as **TERROR, HORROR, FEAR, and WORDS**! While it's true that EC was the first to use these words... along with **HAUNT, CRYPT, and TALENT**... in the comic mag field, these words cannot be repeated! Any old slob can come along and use these words as long as he doesn't use them in the same combinations that E.C. has used them in its titles! That this has caused much confusion among you clever readers who have yet to learn to recognize an EC mag by its format and words is laugh! The bigger issue when I was informed that some publisher had put out a book called "Telling Terror" the title of our comic! Well, let me say, I jumped down my idiot editors' throats... and they in turn jumped down the rival publisher's

throat... and the name will be changed! As far as those other titles that were equally close to EC's are concerned, all I can do is to ask you to open your blood-shot eyes, try not to clatter, and look for the EC seal... the words re-plastered with 'em! So get smart, babies... wake up! (Aww, shoo! You're over-doing it!—Editors!) So stop relating my twisted story!

And now for some mail... a letter from Grace is left for us!

Dear Crypt-Keeper,

... I notice that you always get the impression, "hiddididid!" That I don't like because although I am only 14 years old, I'm sure that every adult read your mag. And I don't think of myself as a "hiddidid" either!

Robert Rattle  
San Antonio, Texas

Well, old man, when you're as old as I am even an adult is a "hiddidid!" But when I call you "hiddidid" it's really a form of endearment... an acknowledgment of the fact that you're a kid. But if enough of you kiddies write in and complain, I'll stop it until the next month!

Dear Crypt-Keeper,

My father is a barber, and now he only has your magazine in the rack to his shop. When the customers read them, their heads stand on end and it makes my old man a job easier!

Eddie Festina  
Lansing City, M.I.

Larry Barker kindly asks!

Dear Crypt-Keeper,

The store keeper where I get your mag keeps a copy hidden for me so I'm sure of getting it!

Robert Foster  
Greenwood, Dela.

Never can tell when the store might be hidden, hiddidid! Why don't you make doubly sure of getting every copy by subscribing... The let me your's supply... all subscribing issues!

And sets of pictures of the Three Ghoulies are all the night as well as want any longer to order... the price isn't going down... and this offer is limited! It will expire in 1957! And remember... only 125 sets to a customer (each of a quarter of covered! No wholesale price!)

The address for mail, picture orders, subscriptions, and inserts is

The Crypt-Keeper  
Room 708, Dept. 30  
225 Lafayette Street  
N.Y.C. 11, N.Y.

**THIS LITTLE GEM OF BLACK  
HORROR IS CALLED...**

*"Auntie, it's  
Coal Inside!"*



TOM BROKE HIS SEVEN-YEAR-OLD HEAD ANGRILY! THE VOICE CONTINUED! IT GRATED IN TOM'S EARS! THIS TIME IT WAS HIGH-PITCHED AND EXCITED! IT WAS ALWAYS DIFFERENT! LAST TIME IT'D BEEN LOW AND SOFT! THE TIME BEFORE THAT, IT'D BEEN LOUD AND BRUFF...!

SO ON, TOM! YOUR AUNT'S NOT HOME NOW! IT'S A GOOD CHANCE! YOU NEED A FEW PIECES, AUNT! SO AHEAD! SO ON DOWN!

NO! AUNT AUNTS FORBID ME! I MUST! AUNT AUNTS SAID.



SHE'LL NEVER KNOW, TOM! NOW ARE YOU GOING TO BE ABLE TO WALK UP THE SIDEWALK WITHOUT A HUNK OF COAL? JUST ONE PIECE... ONE SMALL PIECE!

SEE, I DO NEED IT BADLY! TODAY'S THE GAME! I GOTTA KEEP SCORE! OKAY! I'LL DO IT! I'LL GO DOWN INTO THE COAL-BIN!



TOMMY OPENED THE DOOR IN THE KITCHEN THAT LED TO THE CELLAR AND TIPTOED DOWN THE STEPS. HE HESITATED AT THE BOTTOM, PEERING THROUGH THE SMOG AT THE BOARD-PARTITION NEXT TO THE FURNACE THAT SECTIONED OFF THE COAL-BIN FROM THE REST OF THE CELLAR.

OVERHEAD, A BOARD CREAKED! TOMMY STOPPED BESIDE THE COAL-BIN DOOR, LOOKING UP.

MOTHER... MAYBE? SAW SHE COULDN'T HAVE COME TO THE STORE AND BACK SO FAST?

TOMMY LISTENED FOR A MOMENT. THERE WAS NO SOUND! HE SWUNG OPEN THE COAL-BIN DOOR AND STEPPED IN... ONTO THE BLACK DUST-COVERED FLOOR...

SEE! THE COAL'S DON'T MOVE! ALMOST ALL USED! THE MILL'S UP! AUNT AGNES' DUCK'DRAB OUGHT TO ORDER A FEW PILES MORE!



SEE! LAST TIME AUNT AGNES SAVED ME A GOOD LICKIN'!

LAST TIME YOU GOT CAUGHT? NOT THIS TIME, TOMMY!



A FAINT LIGHT FILTERED THROUGH THE BLACKENED CELLAR WINDOW HIGH UP IN THE WALL OF THE COAL BIN. TOMMY KNELT AND PICKED UP THREE OF THE LARGEST LUMPS HE COULD SEE...

BUT! THESE ARE ROSE DRESSES!

GRAT! NOW, GRON, LET'S GET UPSTAIRS BEFORE SHE COMES BACK!



TOMMY WENT OUT OF THE COAL-BIN... CLOSED THE DOOR BEHIND HIM... AND TIPTOED UPSTAIRS JUST AS HE CAME THROUGH THE CELLAR DOOR INTO THE KITCHEN, THE FRONT DOOR SLAMMED!

GOLLY! AUNT AGNES...

TOMMY! I'M HOME! ARE YOU AROUND? COME HELP ME WITH THESE BUNDLES!



TOMMY'S FIRST URGE WAS TO RUN AWAY. BUT BEFORE HE COULD MAKE A MOVE, HIS AUNT WAS IN THE KITCHEN BLARING DOWN AT HIM...

TOMMY! DIDN'T YOU HEAR WE CALL YOU TO HELP ME WITH THESE BUNDLES?

L. I'M SORRY AUNT AGNES! HERE THEY ARE! ONE!



TOMMY EXTENDED TWO BLACKENED, COAL-DUST COVERED HANDS! HIS AUNT GASPED! HER FACE GREW PURPLE WITH RAGE!

TOMMY! YOU'VE BEEN IN THE COAL-BIN AGAIN!

NOO! WHO, ME?



AUNT AGNES SLAMMED THE BUNDLES DOWN ON THE KITCHEN TABLE.

LOOK AT YOU! YOU'RE FILTHY! I TOLD YOU WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF YOU WENT DOWN THERE AGAIN!

SEE, AUNT AGNES! I NEEDED A HIDE TO KEEP SCORE! THERE'S A GAME THIS AFTERNOON! THE VOICE REMINDED ME!

ARE YOU GOING TO START TELLING ME ABOUT THAT STUPID VOICE YOU KEEP HEARING? YOU'RE JUST LIKE YOUR FATHER! A GOOD-FOR-NOTHING LIAR!

I'M NOT A LIAR! I HEAR A VOICE! HONEST! IT TALKS TO ME. IT MAKES ME DO THINGS!



LIAR! LIAR! YOU'RE JUST BAD. THAT'S ALL! NO GOOD LIKE YOUR FATHER! OH, I WARNED MY SISTER NOT TO MARRY HIM!

STOP IT! STOP TALKING LIKE THAT! MY DADDY WAS WONDERFUL!

MAN! HE WAS A WORTHLESS DRUNKARD! IF IT WASN'T FOR HIM, YOUR MOTHER'D BE ALIVE TODAY!

HE WASN'T A DRUNKARD! HE WASN'T!

NO? HOW DO YOU THINK HE AND YOUR MOTHER WERE KILLED? HE WAS DEAD-DRUNK WHEN HE DROVE HOME THAT NIGHT!

NO! I HATE YOU! I HATE YOU!



HE USED TO HEAR VOICES, TOO! VOICES, MAN! THEY WERE THE D.T.'S! HE CAUSED NOTHING BUT TROUBLE FOR ALL OF US! LOOK AT ME! NOW, I'M STUCK WITH YOU!

THE VOICE SAYS YOU HATE ME. THAT'S WHY YOU'RE ALWAYS TELLING LIES AT ME!

I TELL AT YOU BECAUSE YOU'RE BAD! NOW YOU LISTEN TO ME, YOUR MAN! THE NEXT TIME YOU GO DOWN INTO THAT COAL-MINE, I'LL SEND YOU AWAY TO THE CATHAN HOME!

NO, AUNT AGNES! PLEASE DON'T SEND ME AWAY! PLEASE! I'LL BE GOOD! I'LL BE GOOD!





THE VOICE WAS OUTSIDE THE WINDOW NOW! IT DRIFTED BACK TO TOBY FROM HALF-WAY DOWN TO THE GROUND...

"OH NO! IT'S GEEF! IT LOOKS BABY!"



TOBY SLIPPED ONE FOOT OVER THE WINDOW SILL... THEN THE CHEEF HE STARTED DOWN THE HILL!! SUDDENLY A TRUCK PULLED UP BEFORE THE HOUSE...

"GEEF! A TRUCK! THE DRIVER SEES ME!"

"HEY, GEEF! YOU'LL GET HURT!"



TOBY DROPPED TO THE GROUND AS AUNT AGNES EXPLODED THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR...

"I'M THE LOCKSMITH. MA'AM! I SAW HIM AS HE DROVE UP!"

"FOUR BET IN THE HOUSE! I'LL TAKE CARE OF YOU LATER!"



TOBY SCRAMBLED INTO THE HOUSE AND UP TO HIS ROOM! AUNT AGNES TOOK THE LOCKSMITH INTO THE CELLAR...

"OHAY, MA'AM! I BOY YUH! YOU WANT A LOCK ON 'ER SO THE KID CAN'T OPEN IT, ENT ONE THAT OPENS WITH A KEY?"

"THAT'S IT AND... OH, DEAR! IT'S BETTER ORDER SOME MORE COAL!"



WHILE THE LOCKSMITH BURED HIMSELF ON THE COAL BIN DOWN, AUNT AGNES PHONED THE COAL COMPANY...

"THERE'S A LOT OF COAL FOR ONE DELIVERER, MA'AM!"

"I SAID FOUR TONS AND THAT'S WHAT I WANT! WE HAVE A BIG COAL BIN! I ALWAYS ORDER FOUR TONS AT A TIME!"



OF COURSE, TOBY WAS PUNISHED FOR BREAKING OUT OF THE WINDOW, BUT HE PROMISED ONCE MORE THAT HE'D IGNORE THE VOICE FROM THEN ON! THE NEXT DAY...

"NOW YOU'RE TO STAY IN YOUR ROOM WHILE I'M AT THE STORE! IF THE COAL SHOULD COME, JUST TELL THEM TO PUT IT IN THROUGH THE CELLAR WINDOW! AND DON'T FORGET WHAT YOU PROMISED LAST NIGHT!"

"DON'T WORRY, AUNTIE AGNES! I'M NEVER GONNA TO LISTEN TO THE VOICE AGAIN!"



A LITTLE LATER, TOBY LOOKED UP FROM HIS TOWER! SOMEONE WAS CALLING HIM!

"TOBY! TOBY, HELP ME! COME DOWNSTAIRS PLEASE!"

"HUNT! WHY IT'S AUNT AGNES CALLING ME!"





TOBY THROD DOWNSTAIRS! THE VOICE WAS COMING FROM THE CELLAR.

IS... IS THAT YOU, AUNTIE AGNES?

YES, TOBY! COME DOWN! PLEASE! LET ME OUT OF THE COAL-BIN!



THE COAL-BIN?

YES! THE DOOR LOCKED SHUT ON ME! I CAME IN TO SEE IF THE WOODS WERE OPEN SO THEY COULD DELIVER THE COAL! HURRY! THEY'LL BE HERE ANY MINUTE!



AW, NO! I KNOW YOU! YOU'RE NOT GOING TO GET ME INTO ANYMORE TROUBLE!

FORGET FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE! COME DOWN HERE AND LET ME OUT! THE KEY IS IN THE LOCK! JUST TURN IT! PLEASE! QUICKLY!



I PROMISED I WOULDN'T LISTEN TO YOU ANYMORE, AND I WON'T! YOU JUST SOUND LIKE AUNTIE AGNES! YESTERDAY YOU TRIED TO SOUND LIKE MY MOMMY.

TOBY! I AM YOUR AUNTIE AGNES! PLEASE COME DOWN! PLEASE!



WAS MY DADDY A DRUNKARD, AUNTIE AGNES?

NO, TOBY! YOUR DADDY WAS A GOOD MAN! NOW PLEASE COME DOWN.



SEE? YOU'RE NOT! TOBY! FOR MY AUNTIE AGNES! GOOD! MY AUNTIE AGNES! LORD! THE ALWAYS SAID DADDY WAS A DRUNKARD! OPENING!



THE SHRIIL SCREAMS OF DELIGHT FROM THE CHILDREN BANGING AROUND THE COAL TRUCK AND THE DEAFENING ROAR AS THE BLACK FUEL CASCADED DOWN THE TIN SLIDE DROWNED OUT AUNT AGNES'S SHRIERS OF TERROR! LITTLE BY LITTLE, THE HYDRAULIC-LIFTED THE TRUCK-BODY UNTIL FOUR TONS OF COAL HAD POURED INTO THE COAL-BIN BEYOND THE TINY CELLAR WINDOW! FOUR TONS! ENOUGH TO CRUSH THE STRONGEST OF MEN, AS LAST A FRAIL, BUTTER-OLD MAN.



NOW DOESN'T THAT STORY LEAVE YOU WITH A LUMP IN YOUR THROAT? MEN, NOW! IT DID! OLD JOSEPH! IN FACT THEY FOUND ONE IN HER THROAT, AND TWO MORE IN HER MOUTH WHEN THEY FINALLY DUG HER OUT! LUMPS OF COAL, THAT IS! AS FOR TOBY... WELL, HE DOESN'T HEAR VOICES ANYMORE! NOW, IT'S A SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA! THEY SAY THE KIDS GOT A GREAT FUTURE... WRITING THE MUSIC TO THOSE SINGING COMMERCIALS! NOW CAN A SEVEN-YEAR-OLD WRITE MUSIC TO A SINGING COMMERCIAL? COME, COME, NOW! DON'T TELL ME YOU NEVER HEARD ONE! MEN, HERE! BUT



IF THEY HAVEN'T DRIVEN YOU OUT OF YOUR MIND, MY SET ACTUAL PHOTO WILL READ MY COLUMN, THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S CORNER, FOR ALL THE INFO!

# THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HELLO! SO I GOTTA WIND UP THE GHOST-KEEPER'S MAD-MAD AGAIN, EH? YOU KNOW WHY THEY GIVE ME THIS SPOT? 'CAUSE I'M THE MOST HORRIBLE! DON'T WORRY! MY 1000+ EDITORS KNOW A BAD THING! YEP, IT'S THE OLD WITCH MISTRESS OF THE HAUNT OF FEAR! THE FIRE IS LIT UNDER MY YOG-KNOW-WHAT, AND I'M READY TO DISH OUT ANOTHER UP MY PUTRID-PORTIONS OF POLSATING PLEASANTRIES! THIS LITTLE LADLE OF LURID LOATHSOMENESS WILL DEFINITELY WHET YOUR APPETITE! I CALL IT...GWA...

**NOURNIN,  
AMBROSE...**



ANDREW GEMENT PUSHED OPEN THE HUGE IRON GATE OF HIS UNCLE'S VAST ESTATE AND MOVED UP THE TREE-LINED ROAD TOWARD THE PALACIAL HOUSE THAT LOOMED UP BEFORE HIM IN THE SEMI-DARKNESS.

"SO THIS IS HAWLEY

MANOR? I KNEW THAT UNCLE AMBROSE WAS WEALTHY, BUT I NEVER EXPECTED THIS! I WONDER WHY THEY'VE BECOME

RECLUSES... HE AND AUNT ELNA! OH, WELL! I'LL GET ALL THE DOPE EVENTUALLY...



ANDREW STEPPED ONTO THE PORTICO OF THE IMPRESSIVE MAN-  
SION AND LIFTED THE HEAVY  
BRASS KNOCKER THAT ADORNED  
THE MASSIVE OAK FRONT-DOOR.  
THE HOLLOW BOOM ECHOED AND  
HE EDGED WITHIN.

AS THE DIN OF THE DOOR-  
KNOCKER DIED AWAY, SLOW  
FOOTSTEPS APPROACHED! THE  
HUGE DOOR SWUNG OPEN AND  
A WITHERED WRINKLED FACE  
PEERED OUT.

THE OLD MAN'S AGED FACE LIT  
UP AND A SMILE SPREAD ACROSS  
IT! HE STEPPED BACK PRESENT-  
ING ANDREW TO ENTER.

UGH! THIS PLACE  
GIVES ME THE CREEPS!  
HOW ANYONE COULD  
STAY HERE FOR THREE  
YEARS WITHOUT  
LEAVING IT BEATS  
ME!

Y-YES?

ARE...ARE YOU MY  
UNCLE ANDREW?  
ANDREW HARLEY?

THAT'S ME! COME  
IN! YOU MUST BE RIGHT, OR!  
ANDREW, MY WIFE'S  
SISTER'S BOY!  
I'VE BEEN  
SO ANXIOUS  
TO MEET  
YOU AND  
AUNT ELZA...

THE OLD MAN CLOSED THE DOOR AND LOOKED  
AROUND NERVOUSLY! THEN HE MOVED CLOSE TO  
ANDREW.

DON'T, DON'T BE TOO  
DISAPPOINTED WITH  
AUNT ELZA, WBY!  
SHE...SHE JUST  
WELL!

OH! I'M  
SORRY TO  
HEAR IT!  
WHAT'S  
WRONG?

THE OLD MAN CONTINUED TO PEER FROM SIDE TO  
SIDE! THEN, HE TAPPED HIS TEMPLE.

SHE...SHE'S NOT WELL...HERE!  
EVER SINCE THE FIRST DEATH...

THE FIRST  
DEATH?

OF COURSE! YOU COULDN'T  
HAVE KNOWN! IT HAPPENED  
THREE YEARS AGO! ONE OF  
YOUR DISTANT COUSINS CAME  
TO STAY WITH US! LOVELY  
WOMAN! SHE...SHE DIED...  
IN HER SLEEP!

NO! I...I  
DON'T KNOW!  
BUT YOU SAID  
THAT WAS THE  
FIRST! WERE  
THERE...OTHERS?

TWO OTHERS! MY AUNT  
BROTHER CAME TO STAY  
WITH US ABOUT TWO YEARS  
AGO! HE...HE WAS OLDER  
THAN I! HE PASSED AWAY  
ABOUT A MONTH LATER! THEN  
MY WIFE'S MACE CAME! IT  
WAS TERRIBLE! SUCH A  
YOUNG GIRL...

YOU...YOU  
BETTER TELL  
ME ABOUT  
AUNT ELZA.  
UNCLE! IS  
THERE SOME-  
THING I SHOULD  
KNOW?





HER MOTHER'S DEATH! YOU  
WAS THE LAST STRAW!  
SHE TOOK THE FIRST  
TWO HARDS, BUT THE  
LAST... WELL... SOME-  
THING JUST... SNAPPED!

YOU  
HEAR  
SHE'S  
CRAZY!



SH-H-H! SHE'LL HEAR  
YOU! NO! NOT EXACTLY!  
SHE... SHE'S JUST A  
LITTLE OVER-ORA-  
MATIC... EMOTIONAL...  
YOU KNOW! SUPER-  
SENSITIVE! SHE  
TENDS TO EXAG-  
GERATE!

I... I  
SEE!



HEN, HEN! JUST  
HUMOR HER,  
ANDREW! SHE  
DOESN'T MEAN  
ANY HARM!

I... I WILL,  
UNCLE!  
AMBROSE!  
WHO WAS  
IT?

A FRAIL, THIN, WEE-EYED OLD WOMAN TOTTLED  
INTO THE LIBRARY WHERE ANDREW AND AMBROSE  
STOOD TALKING! SHE STARED AT AMBROSE.



WHO'S HE?  
WHAT'S HE  
DOING  
HERE?

THIS IS ANDREW  
HARLES, MY DEAR!  
I WROTE TO HIM...  
INVITING HIM TO  
STAY WITH US!

ANDREW!  
STELLA, MY  
SISTER'S...  
SON'S HAD IT  
COME TO  
THAT?

I... I DON'T  
UNDERSTAND.  
UNCLE AMBROSE!  
WHAT DOES SHE  
MEAN?



NOTHING, MY  
BOY! NOTHING!  
YOU SEE... YOU  
ARE OUR ONLY  
LIVING NEAR  
NOW!

THE OTHERS  
ARE DEAD!  
ALL DEAD!  
THREE OF  
THEM ARE  
OUT THERE  
IN THE  
RAVINE!



PLEASE, ELBA!  
LET'S TALK  
ABOUT MORE  
PLEASANT  
THINGS!

THIS IS A  
WONDERFUL  
LIBRARY,  
UNCLE  
AMBROSE!  
YOU HAVE  
SO MANY  
BOOKS!

YES! THOU-  
SANDS OF  
THEM! SO YOU  
READ, ANDREW?

A LITTLE,  
MAY ELBA! A  
LITTLE!

EVEN READ  
'MACBETH'.  
ANDREW'S WHERE  
IT SAYS 'MURDER  
WILL OUT'!

ELBA!  
COME, ANDREW!  
I WILL SHOW  
YOU YOUR  
ROOM!



ELSA STARED AT ANDREW, AS HE PASSED HER AND FOLLOWED AMBROSE UP THE MARBLE STAIRS TO THE SECOND FLOOR! THEY STOPPED BEFORE A DOOR AT THE END OF A LONG HALL.

I HOPE YOU WILL BE COMFORTABLE IN HERE, ANDREW!

I'M SURE I WILL BE, UNCLE AMBROSE!

ANDREW'S BEDROOM WAS LARGE AND LAVISHLY FURNISHED WITH EXPENSIVE ANTIQUES! A STONE FIREPLACE COVERED ONE WALL OF THE ROOM! ANDREW TOUCHED A MATCH TO THE WOODS PILED ON THE ANDIRONS, AND SOON THE FIRE'S CHEERY GLOW DANCED ACROSS THE FLOOR! SUDDENLY...

WHO...WHO'S THERE?

IT'S ME...ANDREW! YOUR AUNT ELSA!

THE OLD WOMAN STARED AT ANDREW FROM THE PARTLY-OPENED DOOR...

OH! COME IN, AUNT ELSA! SIT DOWN!

I...I'VE COME TO WARN YOU, ANDREW!

WARN ME, AUNT ELSA?

GET OUT, ANDREW! GET OUT OF THIS HOUSE! NO ONE EVER COME BACK! HE'S A FIEND...A HORRIBLE FIEND!

YOU MEAN UNCLE AMBROSE?

YES! I MUSTN'T LET IT HAPPEN AGAIN! IT'S HORRIBLE HORRIBLE! HE...HE'S A...

ELSA!

AMBROSE STOOD FRAMED IN THE DOORWAY. HIS WRINKLED FACE PURPLE WITH ANGER! HE SHARLED AT THE OLD WOMAN.

ELSA! GET TO BED...THIS MINUTE!

Y-YES, AMBROSE! I...I'M GOING!

THE OLD WOMAN LOOKED AT ANDREW. HER EYES PLEADING, AS SHE CHIFFLED OFF...

REMEMBER, ANDREW! MURDER WILL OUT!

HURRY ON, YES, AUNT ELSA!

GOOD-NIGHT, ANDREW! COME, MY DEAR!



THE NEXT MORNING ANDREW WAS AWAKENED BY A FRANTIC POUNDING ON HIS BEDROOM DOOR...

ANDREW! WAKE UP!  
WHAT'S GOING ON?  
IT'S AUNT  
ELSA! SHE'S...



WHAT IS IT, DUTY?  
WHAT'S HAPPENED?

ELSA? SHE... SOB...  
SOB... SHE'S  
DEAD?



HELLO! THE PLOT THICKENS,  
EH, KIDDER? WELL, THE GOG  
SANE AND PROFOUND OLD  
ELSA - DEAD OF NATURAL CAUSES!  
ANDREW'S UNCLE WAS PRETTY  
BROKEN UP OVER ELSA'S DEATH!  
THE FUNERAL WAS DIMINISHED  
AND SHORT! THEY CARRIED THE  
OLD GAL OUT TO THE FAMILY  
MAUSOLEUM... AND THAT WAS  
THAT...



ONE EVENING, A FEW DAYS AFTER  
ELSA'S ENTOMBMENT...



WHAT'S THAT?  
LOOKS LIKE A FLOWER  
DOWN THERE... GOING  
TOWARD THE MAUSO-  
LEUM! WHY, IT'S  
UNCLE AMBROSE!  
AND HE'S CARRYING  
FLOWERS!

EVENING AFTER EVENING, AMBROSE  
WOULD LEAVE THE HOUSE AND GO  
DOWN TO THE FAMILY MAUSOLEUM  
TO SPEND SOME TIME WITH HIS  
DEAR DEPARTED ELSA...



POOR OLD GUY!  
HE REALLY  
MISSES HER!

THEN, ONE EVENING, ANDREW WAS BROWSING AROUND  
THE LIBRARY LOOKING FOR SOMETHING TO READ. A  
TITLE CAUGHT HIS EYE! 'MACBETH'? HE COULD  
ALMOST HEAR AUNT ELSA'S VOICE...



EVER READ  
'MACBETH', ANDREW?  
WHERE IT SAYS  
'MURDER WILL OUT'?

ANDREW REACHED UP AND PULLED DOWN THE BOOK!  
HE OPENED IT...



WHY, WHY THIS ISN'T 'MACBETH' AT  
ALL! IT'S A DRAFT! AUNT ELSA'S  
DRAFT!

HEL, HEL! YEP! THERE IT WAS! HIDDEN BETWEEN THE LEATHER-BOUND COVERS OF 'MACBETH'! AUNT ELSA'S DIARY! ANDREW READ IT! EVERY PAGE! ELSA'S WORDS WERE TRUE... BUT SOME ENTRIES MADE SENSE...

...AND THIS ONE, INSPECTOR! LISTEN! I KNOW NOW HOW HE MURDERED THEM! SUFFOCATION! HE DOPED THEM SO THEY COULDN'T RESIST... THEN SMOOTHERED THEM WITH 'A PILLOW' BUT WHY NOT?

AND THIS ONE! NOW I KNOW WHY! IT MUST NEVER HAPPEN AGAIN! I MUST NOT LET IT! AND THE LAST ENTRY! ANOTHER HAS COME! HE WILL BE NEXT! I MUST WARN HIM! THE PERSON WILL DO TO HIM WHAT HE HAS DONE TO THE OTHERS! IF AMBROSE WERE TO FIND OUT THAT I MEAN TO TELL MURDER EVERYTHING, HE WOULD KILL ME!

MINUTE! AND YOU SAY AMBROSE CAME IN THAT NIGHT AND INTERRUPTED ELSA? JUST AS SHE WAS ABOUT TO TELL YOU SOMETHING?

THAT'S RIGHT, SIR! BUT ONE THING PUZZLES ME! IF AMBROSE MURDERED ELSA, WHY DOES HE BLOOMH HERE?

IF HE MURDERED HER? WHY THE DOG FELT IT WAS A NATURAL DEATH?

SUFFOCATION LOOKS LIKE A NATURAL DEATH!

THE ONLY WAY TO PROVE THIS ONE WAY OR THE OTHER, MR. SHERAT, IS TO GET PERMISSION TO EXAMINE THE BODY AND PERFORM AN AUTOPSY!

PROMISING NOT TO REVEAL THAT ANDREW HAD TIPPED THEM OFF, TWO DETECTIVES CAME TO SEE AMBROSE HAMLET...

EXCUSE MY LATE WIFE'S NOOD! PERFORM AN AUTOPSY ON HER! NEVER! NEVER!

IF YOU REFUSE, MR. HAMLET, WE CAN GET A COURT ORDER GIVING US PERMISSION TO DO IT OVER YOUR OBJECTIONS!

AMBROSE'S AGED BODY SHOOK AS HE BOBBED! A TEAR TRICKLED DOWN HIS WIDENED CHEEK...

PLEASE! YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO DISTURB HER! SHE'S BEEN LAID TO REST! LEAVE HER... I SEE YOUR SON... SON... LEAVE HER BE!

LET'S GO RIGHT, CHIEF!



THE TWO DETECTIVES LEFT THE SCREAMING OLD MAN! ANDREW STOPPED THEM AT THE DOOR.



WHAT HAPPENED?

HE REFUSED!

KEEP YOUR EYE ON HIM, GEMERT!

LATER THAT EVENING, ANDREW WANDERED FROM HIS WIN "IN AS OLD AMBROSE CROSSED THE GARDEN TO THE FAMILY MAUSOLEUM.

"IT'S BETTER FOLLOW HIM THIS TIME! HE MIGHT TRY TO HIDE THE BODY!"



AFTER THE OLD MAN ENTERED THE CRYPT, ANDREW WENT DOWNSTAIRS AND ACROSS THE GARDEN! THE DOOR TO THE MAUSOLEUM WAS PARTLY OPEN! ANDREW, PEERED IN.



GO O LORD!

A WAVE OF NAUSEA AND REVULSION SWEEP OVER ANDREW! HE TURNED AWAY FROM THE HORRIBLE SIGHT AND RAN TOWARD THE HOUSE! FINALLY, HE COULD NO LONGER HOLD HIS GUTS! GEMERT, A FEW MIN.



GEMERT! THAT'S YOUR WHAT'S PROBABLY

HE'S SHOT KELLY! WHERE'S YOUR UNCLE, GEMERT?

OH, IN THE CRYPT.

THE DETECTIVES HURRIED TO THE MAUSOLEUM AND FLUNG THE DOOR OPEN! AMBROSE HAWLEY SPUN AROUND FROM THE PARTIALLY EATEN CORPSE OF HIS LATE WIFE AND OTHER CHILDREN, HIS FOAMY MOUTH DROOLING, AT THE INTRUDERS.



DEAD? YOU WERE RIGHT, INSPECTOR! HE... HE IS A SNOOZE!

THEY DRAGGED THE SHRIEKING, CLAWING OLD MAN FROM HIS VICTIM AND TOOK HIM AWAY! LATER THEY RETURNED TO THE CRYPT AND EXAMINED THE OTHER COFFINS.

THE SEE, GEMERT! WHEN WE TOOK OUT FROM THE UNDERGROUND IN TOWN, THAT HAWLEY REFUSED TO ALLOW HIM TO EMBALM THE BODIES, WE KNEW SOMETHING WAS WRONG! THE OTHER CORPSES HAVE BEEN STRIPPED OF THEIR FLESH, TOO!

THAT'S WHY HE INVITED YOU HERE TO HAWLEY MANOR! LIKE THE OTHERS, HE INTENDED YOU TO BE ONE OF HIS MEAL-TICKETS!

WEE, WEE! LOOK! THEY CAUGHT UP WITH OLD AMBROSE WHEN THEY DID! HE WAS RUNNING OUT OF RELATIVES! THANKS TO OLD ELZA WHO WAS FED UP WITH THE WHOLE AFFAIR, ANDREW WAS SAVED FROM A VERY DISTASTEFUL EXPERIENCE! AND IF YOU'D LIKE TO BE SAVED FROM A DISTASTEFUL EXPERIENCE, DON'T SEND FOR MY PHOTO!

THE METHOD FOR OBTAINING IT CAN BE FOUND IN THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S GORMER... FOR YOU FRIENDS WHO LIKE THAT SORT OF STUFF! WE'LL ALL SEE YOU REST IN THE VAULT OF HORROR! TILL THEN, SNOOZE-BYE AND UNPLEASANT DREAMS!





# IN ALL THY WAYS ACKNOWLEDGE HIM



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